

Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program  
Evaluation Criteria

## Nonmotorized<sup>[1]</sup> Category

*Nonmotorized grants provide quality opportunities for equestrians, hikers, mountain bicyclists, and other trail recreationists – opportunities that satisfy user needs, are environmentally responsible, and minimize conflict among user groups.*

Applicants must provide oral responses to the following team-scored (1-7) evaluation criteria. See IAC NOVA Policy Manual 14 and Application Manual 5n for more information.

<b>NOVA – Nonmotorized (NM) Criteria Summary</b>					
Scored by:	#	Title	Type	Mult/Max	NOVA Plan Policy
Team	1	Need	All	3/15	A-1
Team	2	Need Fulfillment	All	3/15	A-1
Team	3a	Site Suitability	A	2/10	C-10, D-9
Team	3b	Project Design	D	2/10	C-1, C-5, C-6, D-1, D-5
Team	3c	Maintenance	M	2/10	C-5, C-11, D-5, D-11
Team	3d	Planning	N	2/10	B-4, C-7, C-10, C-6, D-9
Team	4	Readiness to Proceed	All	-/5	-
Team	5	Predominantly Natural	All	-/5	-
Team	6	Project Support	All	2/10	C3, D-3
Team	7	Cost-Benefit	All	-/5	A-1, C-4, D-4
IAC staff	8	Matching Shares	All	-/5	C-3, D-3
IAC staff	9	Population Proximity	All	2	C-2, D-2
IAC staff	10	GMA Preference	All	0	RCW 43.17.250
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE				72	

**KEY:**

Team	=	Criteria scored by Advisory Committee/evaluation team
IAC staff	=	Criteria scored by IAC staff
All	=	Includes Acquisition, Development, Maintenance, or Planning
A	=	Acquisition proposals
D	=	Development proposals
M	=	Maintenance proposals
N	=	Planning proposals (architect. and engineering, master plans, feasibility studies, etc.)
Mult/Max	=	Multiplier and maximum points possible for this criterion
Policy	=	See IAC's <i>NOVA Plan</i> (2002)

<sup>[1]</sup> With the passage of Chapter 105, Laws of 2004, this category's name was changed from "Nonhighway Road" to "Nonmotorized" in order to more clearly reflect its purpose of supporting nonmotorized recreational trail opportunities.

## NOVA NONMOTORIZED (NM) PROJECT SCORING CRITERIA

For each **Team Scored** question below (1-7), descriptive text and bullets are provided to help applicants and evaluators. A successful proposal need not address each consideration, nor is the list all-inclusive.

**Team Scored**—All applicants must respond.

### 1) **NEED. What is the need for new, improved, or maintained NM facilities?**

[NOVA Plan Policy A-1]

- ▶ State, Regional, Land Manager, or Community Needs
    - ▷ Cite any publicly reviewed and adopted plan that supports the need for the project by name, location, or type.
    - ▷ Describe why NOVA funds are critical to the completion of this project (• current physical condition, • safety and/or • environmental issues, • imminent threat of loss to NM recreation, etc.).
  - ▶ Inventory Issues
    - ▷ Describe similar opportunities now available in the local area.
    - ▷ Describe the need for new and/or improved facilities in the service area. For example, are there overcrowding issues? Is this a unique recreational experience?
    - ▷ Describe any significant maintenance backlog in the project area.
  - ▶ Use
    - ▷ Describe how accessible (including to the disabled community) the finished project will be to intended users.
    - ▷ Describe how heavily trails and support facilities in the area are used.
    - ▷ Describe any un-served or under-served user groups.
- a. *No or very weak* need established. .... (0 points)
- b. *Fair - moderate* need established. .... (1-2 points)
- c. *Strong* need established. .... (3 points)
- d. *Very high – exceptional*: several points made to establish need. .... (4-5 points)

Evaluators award zero to 5 points which staff later multiplies by 3.

Last revised 2004.

**Team Scored**—All applicants must respond.

**2) NEED FULFILLMENT. How well will this project fulfill the service area's needs identified in question 1, "Need"?**

[NOVA Plan Policy A-1]

- ▶ How does the project meet the applicant's stated goals and objectives?
- ▶ How does the project meet the needs identified in the service area?
- ▶ How will the project meet the needs of any underserved user groups?
- ▶ How have intended users been included in the planning process *and* how has their feedback been addressed?

a. *No or weak evidence of need satisfaction* ..... (0 points)

b. *Fair - moderate evidence.* Project fills only a small portion of the apparent or expressed need ..... (1-2 points)

c. *Strong evidence.* An important need will be addressed by the project, although that need will not be completely filled by the project as proposed..... (3 points)

d. *Very high – exceptional evidence.* The project fulfills a critical need. .... (4-5 points)

Evaluators award zero to 5 points which staff later multiplies by 3.

Last revised 2004.

ONLY answer this question if your project is an "Acquisition."

**Team Scored**—Only Acquisition applicants respond.

**3a) SITE SUITABILITY. To what extent is the site to be acquired well suited for the intended NM recreational activity?**

[NOVA Plan Policy D-13, D-14]

Describe the suitability of the site's physical features for the proposed uses. Generally, sites most compatible with the proposed uses will score higher. Consider such factors as:

- ▶ Size
- ▶ Topography
- ▶ Soils
- ▶ Natural amenities
- ▶ Location.

Other considerations include:

- ▶ How is the proposed acquisition compatible with the adjacent land uses?
- ▶ Does this acquisition provide a buffer to the existing use area? Explain.
- ▶ Will the proposed acquisition link to an existing NM facility? Explain.

- a. *No evidence presented*, or the site is *inappropriate* for the intended NM recreation use(s)..... (0 points)
- b. *Below average – moderate*. The site appears *fair* for the intended use(s), though there may be some concern over its appropriateness. .... (1-2 points)
- c. *Good*. Site is adequate/reasonable for intended uses ..... (3 points)
- d. *Very good – excellent*. Site is outstanding ..... (4-5 points)

Evaluators award zero to 5 points which staff later multiplies by 2.

Last revised 2004.

ONLY answer this question if  
your project is a "Development."

**Team Scored**—Only Development applicants respond.

**3b) PROJECT DESIGN. Is the proposal appropriately designed for intended uses and users?**

[NOVA Plan Policy D-1, D-5, D-13]

- ▶ If the facility has a *Primary Management Objective* (PMO)<sup>[†]</sup>, describe how the project design is compatible with the objective.
- ▶ Explain how the project uses *proven design criteria* including:
  - ▷ Barrier free and other user friendly elements.
  - ▷ Adequate spatial relationships, surfacing, width, and grades (• switchbacks, • how is multiple-use facilitated?)
  - ▷ (Trails) Were "loop" designs considered and if present, do the loops lead to a primary destination?
- ▶ Explain how the design:
  - ▷ Protects and complements the environment.
  - ▷ Makes the best use of the site.
  - ▷ Minimizes the need for ongoing maintenance.
  - ▷ (For existing trails) Does not over build (retains the difficulty level) and minimizes user displacement.
- a. *Poor evidence presented or inappropriate design.* [For example: • Environmental issues not addressed; • trail difficulty level and/or user experience not addressed or can be expected to change substantially; • high probability of user displacement]. ..... (0 points)
- b. *Below average – moderate.* [For example: • Design does fair job of addressing environmental issues; • use difficulty level and user experience will change somewhat; • there appears to be some user displacement]. ..... (1-2 points)
- c. *Good.* [For example: • Design is adequate/reasonable to address environmental problems, • retains similar difficulty level/user experience; • may be low levels of user displacement]..... (3 points)
- d. *Very good – excellent.* Design is outstanding [if a trail: retains difficulty level and user experience with minimal or no user displacement] ..... (4-5 points)

Evaluators award zero to 5 points which staff later multiplies by 2.

Last revised 2004.

<sup>[†]</sup> *Primary Management Objective* (PMO) means the main type of use for which a facility is managed. PMOs are adopted by policy and communicated to users. For example, if an agency carries out a policy to specifically manage a facility for hikers and equestrians, and communicates this fact to users, the PMO is hiker-equestrian. Such a PMO does not necessarily mean that other uses are prohibited. A PMO provides all users with an understanding of the type of experience to expect.

ONLY answer this question if your project is "Maintenance."

**Team Scored**—Only Maintenance applicants respond.

**3c) MAINTENANCE. Are the project's maintenance goals and objectives appropriate?**  
[NOVA Plan Policy C-5, C-11, D-5, D-11]

- ▶ Is the project needed to ensure protection of an environmentally sensitive site? Explain.
  - ▶ What safeguards are in place to ensure an appropriate level of trail difficulty/challenge is retained?
  - ▶ Does the site pose special maintenance problems? Will it be cost-effective to continue maintenance over the long term? Explain.
  - ▶ By how long will this maintenance project extend the service life of this facility? Explain.
- a. *Poor.* Too little information is presented, *or* the goals–objectives don't seem appropriate..... (0 points)
- b. *Fair – moderate.* Project appears to be only somewhat important..... (1-2 points)
- c. *Good.* Project effectively addresses a relatively important need in a timely way. .... (3 points)
- d. *Very good – excellent.* This project effectively addresses a critical maintenance need in a timely way ..... (4-5 points)

Evaluators award zero to 5 points which staff later multiplies by 2.

Last revised 2004.

**ONLY** answer this question if  
your project is “Planning.”

**Team Scored**—Only Planning applicants respond.

**3d) PLANNING. To what extent will the proposed plan or study help provide NM opportunities?**

[NOVA Plan Policy B-4, C-7, C-10, D-6, D-9]

- ▶ Will this project directly benefit NM recreation? Explain. (For example, will it result in a development proposal, or will more planning be required?)
  - ▶ Are the project’s planning goals and objectives appropriate? Explain.
  - ▶ What are the qualifications and experience of the personnel (including consultants)?
- a. *Evidence is vague* or it appears that the project will not lead to new NM opportunities ..... (0 points)
- b. *Fair – moderate evidence.* Proposal will likely lead to weak or below average new opportunities. .... (1-2 points)
- c. *Good.* Proposal will likely lead to an above average or several solid opportunities. .... (3 points)
- d. *Very good – excellent.* Proposal will likely lead to an outstanding NM opportunity(ies) ..... (4-5 points)

Evaluators award zero to 5 points which staff later multiplies by 2.

Last revised 2004.

**Team Scored**—All applicants must respond.**4) READINESS TO PROCEED. How soon after the grant is approved can the project begin?**

There are often good reasons why managers are unable to initiate a project immediately. Even so, *if other factors are equal*, the NOVA Program favors projects that move the quickest.

- **Start-Finish:** • When will work on the project begin? • When will work be completed and/or the facility be open to use?
- **Preliminary Work:** Are all elements ready— • permits, • environmental clearances, • engineering, • signed agreements, • equipment, • labor force, etc.? • Have any appeals been resolved? (Explain.)
- **Acquisitions:** • Has the landowner been contacted? • Is the owner willing to sell? • Does the applicant hold an option on the property? (Describe). • Are required appraisals and reviews completed? (Describe). • Will the land acquired be immediately available for NM use? Explain.

- a. *Very large* barrier(s) exist that will likely delay the project a year or more..... (0 points)
- b. *Substantial – significant* barrier(s) exist which will likely be removed in the next 12 months..... (1-2 points)
- c. *Minimal – ordinary* barrier(s) exist which will likely be removed by the time a grant is approved. .... (3-4 points)
- d. *No* barriers; the project is ready to move forward immediately..... (5 points)

Evaluators award zero to 5 points; there is no multiplier.

Last revised 2004.



**Team Scored**—All applicants must respond.

**5) PREDOMINANTLY NATURAL. Is the project site in a predominantly natural setting?**

Consider the project's immediate physical setting, not its distance from structures that affect the setting. Apart from the proposal, to what extent does the user experience the natural environment versus human structures and activities: • buildings, • radio/cell towers, • roads, • dams, etc.?

A setting does not need to be pristine or untouched to rate a high score: • a second growth forest is often sufficiently natural, • a remote high camp or ridge-top trail can afford distant views of cities or towns, • a trailhead can be located adjacent to or at the end of a paved road, • the number of people using the facility will not necessarily detract from the setting or desired recreational experience.

In responding to the following, when considering the sights and sounds of a natural setting, do not consider the facility proposed for funding.

- a. *No evidence presented, or site is not natural.* ..... (0 points)
- b. *Setting is not very natural:* too much noise, too many roads, clear cuts, etc..... (1-2 points)
- c. *Setting is mostly natural:* though it may pass through a clear cut or touch a road, virtually all views and sounds are natural ..... (3-4 points)
- d. *Setting is natural:* any trees are predominately mature; sights and sounds are all natural. .... (5 points)

Evaluators award zero to 5 points; there is no multiplier.

Last revised 2004.

**Team Scored**—All applicants must respond.**6) PROJECT SUPPORT. To what extent do users and the public support the project?**

[NOVA Plan Policy D-3, D-4]

Support can be demonstrated in both financial and non-financial ways and varies depending upon the project type. In scoring this question, evaluators consider the type of support that is most relevant to the project. Examples of support/endorsement include:

- Voter approved initiatives and/or bond issues.
- Donations to help complete the project: • labor, • equipment, • money or • materials, • land.
- Advisory board approval, completion of a public planning process that endorsed this project.
- Positive letters, oral testimony at public meetings, support from “friends/user groups”.
- Positive (or the absence of extensive negative) media coverage.

- a. *No or very weak evidence* presented. .... (0 points)
- b. *Minimal – fair specific evidence* of support. .... (1-2 points)
- c. *Moderate* support. .... (3 points)
- d. *Exceptional – overwhelming support*. .... (4-5 points)

Evaluators award zero to 5 points which staff later multiplies by 2.

Last revised 2004.

**Team Scored**—All applicants must respond.

**7) COST-BENEFIT. Do the project's benefits outweigh its costs?**

[NOVA Plan Policy A-1, D-4]

“Costs” may include fiscal outlays, unacceptable harm to adjoining areas and/or the environment, and/or factors that cause unnecessary ill will from users, the general public, or others. “Benefits” may be economic gains for the community, added opportunity for facility users, improvements to the environment, etc.

- ▶ What is the cost per mile (trails) or other unit of measure (other projects)? Explain.
  - ▶ What is this project's impact on the net availability of NM opportunities? Explain.
  - ▶ What alternatives to the project were considered and why were they rejected in favor of the current proposal?
  - ▶ Describe the recreation and non-recreational benefit(s) this project will provide, including health, community economic development, education, and stewardship.
  - ▶ Describe project's environmental cost-benefit.
  - ▶ Explain why reviewers should have confidence in the budget for this project.
- a. *No evidence* of a net benefit presented ..... (0 points)
- b. *Little – modest evidence* of a mild net benefit ..... (1-2 points)
- c. *Adequate – strong evidence* of a solid net benefit ..... (3-4 points)
- d. *Substantial evidence* of an exceptional net benefit ..... (5 points)

Evaluators award zero to 5 points; there is no multiplier.

Last revised 2004.

## SCORED BY IAC STAFF

### 8) **MATCHING SHARES. What percentage of the total project cost is the applicant contributing?**

[NOVA Plan Policy C-3, D-3]

IAC staff scores this question based on information provided in the application. Only elements considered reimbursable are eligible for use as an applicant's match. (See Manual #14.) No additional information is required.

- a. 0 - 10 percent of project's value will be contributed by the applicant ..... 0 points
- b. 10.01 - 20 percent of project's value will be contributed by the applicant ..... 1 point
- c. 20.01 - 30 percent of project's value will be contributed by the applicant ..... 2 points
- d. 30.01 - 40 percent of project's value will be contributed by the applicant ..... 3 points
- e. 40.01 - 50 percent of project's value will be contributed by the applicant ..... 4 points
- f. Over 50 percent of project's value will be contributed by the applicant ..... 5 points

IAC staff awards zero to 5 points; there is no multiplier.

Last revised 2004.

## SCORED BY IAC STAFF

### 9) **POPULATION PROXIMITY. Is the project site located:**

- ▶ **In a county with a population density of over 250 people / square mile or**
- ▶ **Within 30 miles of a city with a population of 25,000 people or more?**

[NOVA Plan Policy C-2, D-2, *State Trails Plan*]

IAC staff will score this question based on maps provided with the application. No additional information is required. The 2002-2008 *NOVA Plan* directs IAC to encourage projects convenient to population centers. That policy is supported by RCW 79A.25.250, the *State Trails Plan* (1991) and *An Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State: A SCORP Document, 2002-2005*.

- a. Located in a county with a population density over 250 people per square mile *and/or* ..... 1 point
- b. Located within 30 miles of a city with a population of 25,000 people ..... 1 point

IAC staff awards 1 point each for (a) and (b), for a maximum of 2 points.

## SCORED BY IAC STAFF

### 10) **GMA PREFERENCE. Has the applicant<sup>[†]</sup> made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA)?**

[RCW 43.17.250 (GMA-preference required)]

State law requires that:

- (1) Whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant has adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations as required by RCW 36.70A.040 (“state law”).
- (2) When reviewing such requests, the state agency shall accord additional preference to applicants that have adopted the comprehensive plan and development regulations. An applicant is deemed to have satisfied the requirements for adopting a comprehensive plan and development regulations if it:
  - ▶ Adopts or has adopted within the time periods specified in state law;
  - ▶ Adopts or has adopted by the time it requests a grant or loan; or
  - ▶ Demonstrates substantial progress toward adopting within the time periods specified in state law. An agency that is more than six months out of compliance with the time periods has not demonstrated substantial progress.
- (3) A request from an applicant planning under state law shall be accorded no additional preference based on subsection (2) over a request from an applicant not planning under this state law.

This question is scored by IAC staff based on information obtained from the state Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, GMA Division. To qualify for the current grant cycle, the GMA comprehensive plan and development regulations must be completed by IAC’s Technical Completion Deadline.

- a. The applicant does *not* meet the requirements of RCW 43.17.250 ..... (minus 1 point)
- b. The applicant *meets* the requirements of RCW 43.17.250 ..... 0 points
- c. The applicant is a nonprofit organization, state or federal agency ..... 0 points

IAC staff subtracts a maximum of 1 point; there is no multiplier.

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<sup>[†]</sup> County, city, town, and special district applicants only. This question does not apply to nonprofit organizations or state and federal agency applicants.